



Risk Factors for Late Onset Hearing Loss: Family History

Left undetected, hearing loss in infants can negatively impact speech and language acquisition, academic achievement, and social and emotional development. If detected early, however, morbidity can be diminished and even eliminated through early intervention services. This fact sheet reviews the type of family history of hearing-loss that would indicate a need for follow-up care.

BACKGROUND:

Approximately 50% of cases of prelingual deafness are attributed to genetic factors; about 30% of these are thought to be part of a syndrome. A three-generation family history can aid in the diagnosis of the specific cause of the hearing loss and can aid in determining the recurrence risk for other family members.

RISK FACTORS IN FAMILY HISTORY:

- ◆ A family member born with a hearing loss.
- ◆ A family member with a hearing loss detected in childhood.
- ◆ Hearing loss not caused by a medical condition like prematurity or ear infections.
- ◆ Deafness/Hearing loss of a permanent nature:
 - NOT associated with old age.
 - NOT job-related.
 - NOT associated with a sudden noise or accident.

REFERENCES:

1. Gene Reviews, Deafness and Hereditary Hearing Loss Overview, <http://www.genetests.com/servlet/access?id=8888891&key=yqUmazOwMMLvG&gry=INSERTGRY&fcn=y&fw=YWtM&filename=/glossary/profiles/deafness-overview/index.html> (accessed March 7, 2006)
2. Virginia Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Services (VEHDIS) <http://www.vahealth.org/hearing/> (accessed March 7, 2006)

For more information about infant hearing loss, please visit our website: www.doh.wa.gov/ehddi.

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